

age should be raised in Nebraska. That is the opinion of the majority of experts both at the federal level and those testifying at the hearing on LB 56 last February. There are two basic reasons why the drinking age should be 21. First, there is the maturity factor. Now we should really be concerned with why there is a difference between 20 and 21, and there is. Dr. Dale Michaels of the Nebraska Academy of Family Physicians testified at the hearing on LB 56 last spring that younger people have more trouble tolerating alcohol than older people. Alcohol stays in the system of younger people longer than in older people, and as Bill Ford, a Deputy Director of the Nebraska Department of Public Institutions testified last spring, thus younger people are less likely to know their limits than older people. They are more likely to be unable to tolerate the same number of drinks as older persons. Mr. Ford also said that the brain's physical maturity is rarely complete until the age of 21. Now some people are not mature until they are 24 or 25, or later. However, raising the legal age to 21 would conform to the most usual age for the brain's physical maturity. Their second reason why the legal drinking age should be raised is to save lives. Everyone here knows what a menace the drunk driver is in our society. We have passed legislation strengthening our drunk driving laws but the simple fact is that anti-drunk driving laws are not enough. There are not enough state patrolmen or police officers to find everybody...find every drunk driver on every road in this state. I saw a statistic a while back and I forgot who said it or where I got it, but as I recall, it said that there are at any time...at ten o'clock at night 12,000 drunk drivers in the State of Nebraska out on the road. If you don't think that is a menace, you perhaps better think again. So we must approach the problem from several angles. One of those angles is to raise the drinking age. Now there are many people who will make all sorts of guesses as to the effects of raising the drinking age. More 20 year olds will drive to Iowa or Wyoming or Kansas and add to the number of drunk drivers on the road, goes one theory. This is simply disproven by facts. Study after study indicates that raising the drinking age causes a number of fatal alcohol related accidents to drop. The Wagenaar Study in Michigan found that when the drinking age was raised from 18 to 21 there were 31 percent fewer alcohol related accidents in the 18 to 20 year old group. This occurred at a time when the